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Over Against the Treasury

OR COMPANIONS OF
THE PRESENT CHRIST

A Vision

BY
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COURTENAY H. FENN



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INTRODUCTION

BY ROBERT E. SPEER

HOW earnestly we will put a case depends on how earnestly we feel about it. If we have no ardent and glowing love for Christ, and no sense of the unique wonder of the treasure which is in the gospel and is nowhere else, and no yearning toward mankind, so satisfied with what it has and yet so incomplete without Christ, and no deep fear of the infinite loss of all Christlessness, we shall be able to look at the whole missionary idea dispassionately and to speak of it with calmly moderate enthusiasm. If our hearts are aflame with love for Christ, if we hold Christ in any unity with our religion, if we hold the gospel, and believe the gospel, and believe the power of God unto salvation, and men and nations to be lost men and nations, astray from the true way and missing their goal and their life, then we shall speak out with ardor and conviction, and shall set the cause in some such place as it held in the mind of Christ, and as it has always held in the thought of God.

We may put our conviction in reasoned argument or in statement of fact, or we may, if we have the imagination for it, put it in some such vivid form as that in which Dr. Fenn has cast it in this little book. When it is put in this last way, it may

be that the mood out of which the dream springs is necessary to appreciate the dream. But the truth and the appeal are there, whether appreciated or not. And I think everyone who values the saving of men as the Saviour valued it, and to whom heroism and faith appeal, will be moved by this vivid picture. If the appeal which it makes has a tremor in it and moves with a thrill upon our hearts, that is the merit of it. If we are unresponsive to it, do we not need to look in upon our own minds to see whether we have found or have lost the mind that was in Christ, who being in the form of God counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross?

This is the solemn question with which Dr. Fenn's vivid and moving appeal confronts us.

FOREWORD

THE author is aware that this is by no means the first "vision" of the visible presence of Him who, though invisible, is yet as really present in his church as though the eye of the flesh could see his glorious, loving face, and the ear of the flesh could hear that sweetest, truest voice that ever man heard. He has read several of these, and among them some which have stirred the world.

The present story—if such it may be called—is the outgrowth of a conviction, dating back to his earliest ministry, and even to his student life, that such recognition of the presence of Christ in the daily life as is here described, such "practice of the presence of God" in Christ, such individual, personal incarnating of the promised Holy Spirit, to reassure us that he is something more than an effluence or an influence, is the only thing that will put life into all the energies and activities and enterprises of the church, making them something more than societies and associations and movements, namely, powers for the evangelization of the world and the establishment of the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. That is why the world has been stirred by such ideal presentations of this truth: they have been the revelation of an unrealized, unappropriated,

mighty force. The church has been slow in performing its part under the great commission because it has only imperfectly realized that Jesus Christ meant what he said when he promised his disciples, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The difficulties of the church vanish when that is realized; the excuses of the church are silenced in the blush of shame when that becomes the most real fact in our possession; and all the work of the church acquires a tenfold effectiveness when each man asks himself, "What would Jesus do in my place?" and does it.

Fifteen years of contact with the heathen world convince one of the unspeakable need, of the critical opportunity, and of the utter inadequacy of present methods and means. But with each missionary on the field, and each Christian at home, a real companion of the present Christ, the time would not be long in coming when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

Constance H. Fenn

Peking, China.

“TO LIVE IS CHRIST”

To me to live is Christ; I died
With him who once was crucified.
The old I died; the new with him revived;
My life is now from him alone derived.

To me to live is Christ; his life
Has come to end the bitter strife
Of all the evil with the good in me,
And give me sure and perfect victory.

To me to live is Christ, not self:
The world, its pleasures, honors, pelf,
I count but very dross, their brightness dim
When once compared with my new view of him.

To me to live is Christ; my pride
Has shrunk and vanished, placed beside
That great Humility which brought him down
From heaven's glory to a thorny crown.

To me to live is Christ; that foe,
My old-time temper, source of woe
To me and mine, has given place to his;—
And meek and gentle Jesus' temper is.

To me to live is Christ; my will,
Unbroken, strong, determined still,
Is yet transfused with Christ, his loving voice
Become my arbiter of every choice.

To me to live is Christ; his peace,
Within my heart, has caused to cease
The fret and burden of the daily care;—
The cure for worry is the life of prayer.

To me to live is Christ; the pain,
Before so bitter, now is gain.
With him to suffer, with him bear the cross,
How great a joy in what I once called loss!

To me to live is Christ; his power
Is grace sufficient for each hour.
Whate'er the work, where'er the way may lie,
I cannot falter with the Master nigh.

To me to live is Christ; his love
Constraineth me, that I should move
To save the lost, to love the sinner vile,
Remembering that I too sinned erstwhile.

To me to live is Christ; O Death!
There is no sting now in thy breath.
Jesus has conquered Death, that last of foes;
Abounding Life forever with him rose.

To me to live is Christ; O Life
Of glory at the close of strife!
With Christ forever, bliss beyond compare!
'Tis gain to die, for Life beginneth there.

—C. H. F.

CHAPTER I

IT was the Saturday before Foreign Mission Sunday in the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Jaconssett. The church still adhered to the "good (?) old custom" of taking one offering a year for the cause, and that toward the end of April. It was not a deliberate attempt to keep the Foreign Board on the anxious seat until the end of the fiscal year, but simply a custom of long standing. The church had been greatly prospered, for Jaconssett was a growing city, and its expansion had all been in the direction of Westminster Church, which had now enrolled a membership of eight hundred and twenty, the additions for the year having been ninety-five, seventy-six of them by letter from other churches.

It was the fourth year of the pastorate of the Rev. John Stanton, a young man who had manifested an increasing pulpit power, and was much thought of by his people for his social qualities. During his senior year in the seminary he had been seriously considering the needs of the foreign field, when he was called, quite unexpectedly, to a flourishing church in the manufacturing town of Denton. The call to the foreign work seeming to be a more indefinite one, and the parents of his fiancée being opposed to her going abroad, he had concluded that an equally great opportunity for

the use of his talents offered itself in Denton, whence after a few years he was called to Jaconsett. His ministry had not been unfruitful, so far as numbers were concerned; yet he had never felt altogether at ease in his heart as to the decision made on leaving the seminary. He lamented the fact that all his efforts to increase his church's interest in foreign missions had resulted in so little; yet he was sometimes more than dimly conscious of the fact that he was embarrassed in his appeals for this cause by the uncomfortable intruding thought: "Why did you not heed the call yourself? How can you plead with your people for men and money, when you might have been one of the men yourself?"

There was not, in the nervelessness of his appeals, that element, not unknown in the home pulpit, of fear lest gifts for the foreign field should rob the home field. No, Mr. Stanton knew full well that no church has ever thriven through withholding, and that no pastor ever starved because his people were interested in foreign missions. Neither was he afraid of offending his people by his zeal for the foreign work. But the results were small, and year by year he faced the disappointment of failure, rendered the more poignant by his own sense of responsibility.

The presence of a furloughed missionary speaker in his midweek meetings was by no means a rare event, and he had once secured the services of one of the secretaries of the Foreign

Board, for a Sunday morning address; but the young pastor was always embarrassed by his own weakness in seconding the appeal. And now, as the time for another annual offering came round, he was feeling so distressed over the prospect that it almost made him ill. He determined to devote much time to prayer over his preparation for the service on that day, and after a long, hard week of study and meditation, on Saturday evening he shut himself into his study for a last earnest seeking of God's help and blessing. He had been more fatigued than he knew, and, while he prayed, he fell asleep and dreamed.

He was entering the church for the morning service of Foreign Mission Sunday. As he opened the door beside the pulpit, he was conscious of an unusual expression on the faces of the congregation, which, as he had feared, was smaller than usual. The cause was soon apparent. One of the side seats in the pulpit was already occupied, and by a stranger, who rose to meet him as he ascended the steps. Where had he seen that face before? It was one which would be noticeable among ten thousand, not for any striking beauty of feature, but for such a combination of strength and sweetness as is rarely seen in any man, for, with the best of man, it united the best of woman, without even faintly suggesting the effeminate. His manner, modest, unassuming, yet betokened no feeling that he had not a right to be there. He extended his hand, and said in a low voice:

"My brother, I have come at your earnest invitation, as I have done many times before. As your mind and those of this people, are yet weak to discern spiritual realities, I, your Lord and Master, have come this once in bodily form, that henceforth you may feel more confidently assured of my continual presence in your worship."

For a moment the minister could not speak, but simply gazed into that matchless face, convinced that there was no mistake, yet with an unspeakable joy and a strong fear struggling for the mastery in his heart. Then, with almost a sigh of relief, he said:

"Lord, it is indeed thou; and my heart is filled with thanksgiving for this blessed privilege; and now thou wilt speak to my people to-day, and they will heed the message as they would not mine. The service is thine; conduct it as thou wilt."

"I will indeed speak to your people to-day, my brother, but through your lips. Speak you what you believe I would speak; and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you should say." There was no use in arguing against those quiet, decided, yet sympathetic tones. But how could the minister ever lead his people in prayer, or attempt to present the cause, while the Lord himself sat beside him there in the pulpit? It was impossible.

The organ prelude was ended, the first notes of the long metre doxology were struck; mechanically Mr. Stanton joined in the strains, stumbled

through the invocation, and made such work of the psalter that his people gazed wonderingly at him. He gave out the hymn, and sat down, his head throbbing as if it would burst. He read the Scripture lesson, without knowing what he read, and said: "Let us pray." All heads were bowed, and the people waited. The minister tried to speak, but words would not come. At last, in anguish of spirit and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he turned about in the pulpit and burst forth:

"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. I have been unfaithful to thee, unfaithful to this people, and I am not worthy to stand up before them to proclaim thy word. I have told them of the almost countless thousands of thy sheep who are wandering in the darkness of sin and of ignorance, and have urged them to give up their substance to seek and to save that which is lost; but I have turned my own back on the hand that was outstretched to call me to carry the gospel to the heathen, when there was nothing in the world to prevent my going, and I have chosen the comparative comfort of a large home pastorate, and the chance to make a reputation. O Lord, forbid that, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway, unused of thee because I would not let thee use me as thou wouldest! Forgive my sin, make me what thou wouldest have me be, and send me where thou wouldest have me go. And oh, have mercy upon this

people! Let them not suffer for my sin, but give to them a worthier shepherd, and arouse them to earnest prayer and intelligent effort for the speedy evangelization of this world of thine. For thine own name's sake. Amen."

It was the most remarkable prayer ever offered from that pulpit, the briefest and the most intensely earnest, and there was hardly a dry eye in the house when it was concluded. Mr. Stanton's missionary sermon that day was hardly the one which he had so laboriously prepared. His lips had been opened, and in very truth did the Lord teach him what he should speak. He first told his people more fully of the struggle through which he had passed on leaving the seminary, and of his excusing himself from going out as a foreign missionary.

"And now," said he, "I can never rest until I have found out whether I am too old to correct that mistake. If not, you must find another pastor. If I cannot go, I shall stay with you, but I shall not be the man I was before I saw my Lord. My people, I have never been able to set before you your responsibility for the world, as I ought to have done, and I have mourned the fact; but now I can say all that is in my heart; and in the presence of the Christ of Calvary, I plead with you for those for whom he died, and for whose salvation he has commissioned every disciple to go, so far as he may be able, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. There are young people in

this church whom the love of Christ might well constrain to devote their lives to this service. There are men of means who could well afford the joy of supporting a substitute on the foreign field. And there is not one of us who will not be the better for some sacrifice of our own ease and comfort and luxury that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, may shine out into the darkness.

"We have been but playing at this great work, eagerly investing our millions in every form of commercial enterprise for selfish gain, while we have rather grudgingly dropped the pennies and the nickels, and a few dollars, in the plate, to provide for the sending of the gospel to millions of immortal souls. Our young men have fought and bled for their country; our young women have hesitated at no peril in their devotion as nurses of the sick; and parents have not held back the willing offering. But the recruiting of soldiers of the cross is a slow and disheartening task. The country gladly poured out blood and treasures like water to give Cuba's people freedom from temporal oppression, but the church of a million and a quarter members has called it 'conscienceless begging' when called upon for a million dollars and a few hundred young people to save a billion heathen from the crushing slavery of sin.

"O my people, these things ought not so to be! We cannot, we dare not, permit them to continue so to be. We must have a part in the sacrifice

of those who have suffered and died in mission lands, by at least giving until we feel it, and then, like them, giving until we do not feel it. Here in the presence of our Lord, I am more than ever convinced that we, his church and his ministers, have been grieving him beyond expression by making a plaything of this greatest business in the world, while we make a business of the things which the Lord intended should be but playthings. Never can we hope for the outpouring of his blessing, until we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, bringing all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in his house. He looks not at how much we give, but at how much we withhold. Some of us may not have come prepared to respond to this new sense of responsibility, which has come to us through the realization of the presence of the Master himself; but I am sure that he will take our pledges. He is testing our hearts to-day, not our purses. His sacrifice for us was a glad one, though it meant the cross. Let us follow him in joyful offering."

This is but a brief outline of the sermon, which moved that congregation as it had never been moved before. There followed an indescribable scene. Once more the Lord "sat over against the treasury," as the people cast in their gifts. The poor widow was there with her two mites, and the Lord, as of old, smiled upon her and blessed her. The man of moderate means was

there, and gave till he felt it; and the rich man was there, who had been accustomed to "cast in of his superfluity" a dollar bill, and then go home and joke with his friends about how much of his dollar would get to Africa. But it was not a dollar this time. A dollar for missions in the presence of the Lord of life! No; he would be ashamed to give it. He had a ten-dollar bill in his pocket; how would that do? He smoked that much in a couple of weeks. And this was for the salvation of millions, for a year. How much did a whole missionary cost, anyway? What would his wife say if they should have one of their own? Afford it? For that matter, he would hardly notice it. And there was that strong, sweet face looking into his face, yes, on down into his heart; and with a new joy, which embarrassed him by its strangeness and sweetness, he slipped in a paper pledging himself and wife to the support of a new missionary.

And there sat Elder Austin, one of the richest men in the community, regular in attendance at church, a faithful member of the session, but not a believer in foreign missions. Was there not far more that the church could do at home? was his argument; surely he could not be expected to convert other nations when there was such a need of the gospel in America! But, somehow or other, the suicidal selfishness of such a programme struck him to-day as it never had done before. What would he, and what would America, be

to-day, if that plan had been followed from the time of Christ? Was it simply for America that Christ had died? Were the men who had no interest in foreign missions the most enthusiastic in the home work, and the strongest spiritual powers in the local church? For the first time he saw the matter as his Lord saw it, when he stopped not short of the uttermost parts of the earth in his great commission to his disciples.

This thought brought others in its train. If this be indeed the Lord's plan for his church, surely the minister was right in saying that he did not intend that the church should play with this solemn responsibility, putting its millions into commercial enterprise for selfish gain and pleasure, its tens of thousands into the provision of luxurious home churches, where the rich might take comfort during a service and a sermon, soothed by the beautiful architecture of the building, and the music of the trained choir, and congratulate themselves that they were not as other men; and putting only its pennies and dimes and a few dollars into this vast work for the salvation of a world. What a sublime faith it must have taken, for the few who had been in earnest about it, to work on, year after year, with the church's pittances, while her rich men were living for themselves, or at best adding to the magnificent endowments of some of the larger colleges or libraries, or contributing to local philanthropies. Why should not the Lord's work

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have some of the millions? Did men leave any other work to take care of itself because it was, forsooth, a "work of faith"? It was at best the excuse of an unpardonable selfishness. Overwhelmed with a sense of shame for himself, and for others like him, he rose to his feet, and stammered out:

"Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner! I have given some portion of my time, my strength, my means, to the work of this church; but I have turned a deaf ear to the call of the need of heathen millions for whom thou hast died. And the church which calls itself thine has been playing at missions, grudgingly sparing a handful of its young men and women, and permitting them to suffer and toil, with a meager support, while it rests at home and criticises and orders retrenchment. We have let the sons of the poor go to this field and have counted our own sons too good for this sacrifice. How shall we ever lift up our heads before thee to claim thy blessing? We have come short even of the tithe of the income, the minimum requirement under the law; instead of realizing the larger privileges and responsibilities which are ours under the reign of the blessed liberty of love! Henceforth, O Lord, I pledge myself that I will, if my wealth continues with me, at least never give less for thy work than I spend on myself and my family." And, as to Zacchæus of old, Jesus said to him: "To-day I must abide at thy house."

A son of the elder had been sitting in the family

pew, amazed beyond measure by all that was going on around him; but with the conviction growing more and more intense that it meant more for himself than he was willing to acknowledge. Then began the struggle of his life. Reared in luxury, of both natural and acquired refinement, in the senior class of Gale University, possessed of an original mind and quick perceptions, which had made him the prize debater of his class, he had looked forward to the study of the law and a brilliant career at the bar, of which friends, classmates, and professors all had assured him. Could it be possible that he was mistaken in this choice of a profession? Was it indeed true, as he had unheedingly heard, that the majority of those who went as missionaries were children of the comparatively poor, while those who had the means to support themselves, without cost to the church, rarely felt themselves called to turn aside from the pursuit of wealth to take up this self-denying work? In vain he tried to think of an excuse for this; not one would satisfy his conscience, in the presence of the Master.

"Why should you not go?" the question came to him. "Would you regard it as a waste of your time and talents to follow your Master in this work? Who gave you those talents, and to what purpose?"

With head bowed low, he fought his battle, then faced the Master in the joy of triumph, crying:

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Whether

it be China, or India, or Africa, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; and the money wherewith thou hast blessed me, but wherewith I was in danger of cursing myself, shall provide for the necessities of my work."

This was an almost heart-breaking announcement to his father and mother; but they dared not, nor would they, oppose any objection to this logical application of the new spirit of the elder himself, who simply sighed an "Amen," as the Lord accepted the volunteer.

There were many others in that congregation who formed a new plan of life that day; but not all. Some, alas, "went away sorrowful," for they "had great possessions."

The minister had been sitting on the platform, speechless, overwhelmed by what was going on before him. Startled by a sudden sound, he turned his head, and lo, he was not in the church, but sitting in his study chair. His wife stood in the doorway saying:

"John, it is past midnight; are you not coming to bed?"

CHAPTER II

THOROUGHLY awakened by his wife's call, bringing to him a realization of the strangeness of the dream which had come to him as he sat in his study that night before Foreign Mission Sunday, John Stanton hastily threw off his clothes and went to bed, but not to sleep. There was no need for further preparation of a sermon, since his mind and heart were full to overflowing with that new, strange, solemn yet glad, sense of the real, personal presence of the Master, and with the assurance that he had received his message to his people; but the vast outreach of the new thoughts, the infinite possibilities of the new principle of action, if made operative in his church, the logical future for himself,—these things surged and resurged through his mind, giving place gradually to a joyful and quieting assurance that now, as never before, he was in a position to make the best use of his ministry, wheresoever the Lord might lead him. And so he drifted into a dreamless slumber, from which he awoke to a gloriously bright day in what seemed a veritable new world, God's world, in a sense which he had heretofore but dimly comprehended.

It was not that this minister had previously had no conception of the presence of Jesus Christ in the world, or of his own personal relation to him.

He had not failed to tell his people that their following of Jesus Christ must be a very real thing, that it involved self-denial and sacrifice, that the cross must be borne if the crown was to be won and worn; that Christ has promised to be with his disciples always, even unto the end of the world; yet it was evident to him now that, even to himself, it had only been an ideal, with very little about it of tangible reality. His thought of the spiritual character of that presence, instead of meaning to him the vast enlargement of the sphere of Christ's influence, had deprived it of its definiteness and of the greater part of the power which it should have had in his thought and life. He had prayed at every service during his ministry for the presence of the Holy Spirit in wisdom and power, and would have borne testimony that his prayer had many times been answered; he knew that what he had prayed for was the spirit of Jesus Christ; yet when, in his dream, his Master had visibly appeared in the pulpit with him, it had been strangely disconcerting; had upset all his plans, had given him new views of life; and he was very sure that the effect of such an occurrence upon his people would be much as he had seen it in his dream.

What did it all mean? Were Christian people in general leading such lives as they would not live if the Christ were visibly present at their side? Were they deciding questions of vital importance in a way in which they would not dare, and could not even wish, to decide them if Jesus were living

with them as an inseparable companion? Could it be true that Christians were putting far less into the treasury of the Lord than they would offer—not simply from fear, not merely from a sense of shame, but also from a truer, purer motive—if they should see Christ sitting over against the treasury? It was unquestionably true; but it was equally unquestionable that it could not possibly be the will of God that this should so be and continue to be.

So far as he, John Stanton, was concerned, it could never be so again. But could he make his people see that which he had come to see himself? That was the question with him as he went about his preparations for the morning service, surprising his wife by an unwonted quietness, yet intensity of manner. More than once did she involuntarily raise her head to glance at him as they knelt together for morning prayer. What had come over this husband of hers in a single night? The morning hours were too full for him to attempt to tell her before the service of all that had come to him; but his prayer was more simple, more direct, more tenderly eloquent, than any that she had ever heard him offer, and she awaited with more than the usual interest the service in the church.

More than one of the members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church took a second look into their pastor's face that morning as he passed from his room in the church into the pulpit and took his seat. For a time his head was bowed in

his hands in one final fervent appeal that the presence of the Master might be as real a thing to him as it had been in the visions of the night; then he proceeded with the service. His people had always thought Mr. Stanton a fine reader and eloquent in prayer. He had taken much pains with all his pulpit work and had given no little study to oratorical effect. To-day, however, it was not the arts of the elocutionist, nor the easy, graceful flow of well-rounded periods, that took hold of the people as they had never been taken hold of before. Consciously in the presence of the Lord himself, he drew his people into that presence, into the very Holy of holies, and there they abode throughout the service, seeing what their pastor had seen, hearing what he had heard, and growing more and more ready to do what he had in vision seen them do.

There was but one text possible for John Stanton that morning:

"And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury."

The greater part of the sermon consisted of the simple, earnest narration of the dream, omitting, of course, any mention of the names of members of the congregation who had figured in the vision. As he described the scene it seemed to his audience as if they too could see the strong, sweet face of the Lord and Master of them all, looking into their faces, and on down into their hearts, with such an expression of love and longing as they had never

before seen. They saw the millions of heathendom standing and calling by their great, unmet need, "Come over and help us!" They saw their own hearts, with all their selfishness. They saw the stupidity and futility of their proposal to meet that need with a handful of dollars and a few half-hearted prayers. And they heard the Master say, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." Yet, as Mr. Stanton pictured the Saviour sitting by the treasury, he scrupulously avoided urging his people to give from fear of the one who sat there: every offering must be from love of him, and from a moving, constraining desire to please him who had pleased not himself, but had made his life a willing sacrifice that all men of every race might be saved.

He closed with the words: "It was the intention to have made our offering for the great work of foreign missions this morning. Although I have not had opportunity to consult with the other members of the session, I shall venture to ask you to postpone the offering until this evening. I make this request for two reasons: first, I do not wish one cent of our offering to be chargeable to impulse, nor to have one of you feel by evening that you were moved by the narration of a vision to give more than you would have given in a soberer moment. Moreover, it is quite possible that some of you have not come prepared to give all that you now feel you ought and wish to give. If you have seen the Lord Christ face to face this

morning, as I have, you will be here this evening, and will make your offerings with a realizing sense that he does indeed sit over against the treasury, ready to bless you as you give your gifts to him, not to a board or a cause, or even to the church or the unevangelized millions, but to him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Therefore, let us first give our own selves unto the Lord.

“Our ever blessed Saviour and Master, we thank thee for the revelation of thyself which thou hast given us this day. May it mean unmeasured blessing in all the days that are to come. May thy living, loving, quickening, constraining presence be a more real thing in our lives henceforth. Infinite spirit as thou art, forbid that we should regard thee as only a spirit, and, as such, not merely without flesh and blood, but without definite contact with the life of to-day. As infinite spirit, take thou such complete possession of our spirits that henceforth for us to live shall be Christ, that we may think thy thoughts and speak thy words and do thy deeds, multiplying by as many fold as we are more than one in number, the beneficent, life-giving influences which were present and potent in thy blessed person when thou wast visibly dwelling in this world. May we bear the burden of sorrow thou didst bear for a world lying in wickedness. May we yearn, as thou didst yearn, to seek and to save that which is lost, of every race and tongue. Forbid that any

one of us should do less for foreign missions than thou wouldest do wert thou in the place of that one. Bring before us the vision of the world's great need; make to ring in our ears the great commission; impress upon us the full meaning of thy cross and thy promise; until our hearts are moved with the compassion which moved thy heart, and we are filled with the courage which filled thy breast, and become eager to offer thee our possessions and our lives for such use as thou wilt make of them. In thine own name, and for thine own glory we ask it. Amen."

As the congregation joined in singing the old familiar "Missionary Hymn," for the first time in their lives many of the members of that church realized the full personal application of the third stanza, the most frequently omitted of all the hymn:

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation!
The joyous sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name."

The impression made by the service had been too solemn to admit of the usual social conversation about the church doors and on the way home. The talking would come later; but there was a vast amount of thinking to be done first.

To some members of the session the postpone-

ment of the offering until the evening service had seemed at first of very questionable expediency, for, as in most churches, this service was, as a rule, much more lightly attended than that of the morning; but the more they thought of the effect produced upon themselves by their pastor's words, the more convinced they became that the attendance that evening would not be light, nor the offering the less for its postponement.

And they were right. There were a few who would not go. They had been talking all the afternoon about the childishness of dreams, and their utter inappropriateness in the pulpit. Moreover, it was irreverent to try to bring Christ down again in this fashion. It seemed like materialism, and might even incline toward fetichism and idolatry. Christ was a divine and spiritual being, and should be worshiped and served spiritually, and not as a being of flesh and blood. Some of them even suspected their pastor of Unitarian tendencies in his emphasis on the human nature of Christ. And as to the heathen, were they not responsible for their own condition? The only good Chinaman was a dead Chinaman, and to attempt to take the gospel to China was nothing more nor less than casting pearls before swine. Had they not just recently turned again and rent those who had gone to them with the gospel? If the Lord wanted them in his kingdom, surely he was able to bring them there without the waste of the lives and the hard-earned money of Christian people!

Among those who remained away were two of the wealthy men of the church, who did not dare to go. They were outwardly correct in their manner of life and regular in attendance at church; but they had gone away from the morning service sorrowful, because they "had great possessions."

But almost everyone who had been present in the morning returned in the evening, and with them so many of their relatives and neighbors that chairs had to be brought in from the lecture room to seat the company that gathered.

After a brief service of praise and the reading of Scripture, Mr. Stanton offered this simple prayer:

"O Thou who in the days of thy visible presence in the world didst sit over against the treasury in the temple, to observe the manner of the love which those who delighted to call themselves the people of God bare to him; we have gathered here to-night for none other purpose than to prove our love for thee by the gifts which we are about to cast into thy treasury. We are not going to give to thee grudgingly or of necessity, for that is not the way in which thou hast given to us. We are not going to give because we see thee sitting over against the treasury and fear thy wrath if our gifts are small. Nay, Lord, our most earnest desire to-night is that we may see thee sitting there, may be assured that the gifts of our love are acceptable in thy sight, and may go forth from this place with a new joy in the knowledge that we are

continuing and increasing that work for which thou didst come into the world, and into which thou didst send forth thy disciples. Let there be no self-deception among us, preventing an absolute surrender and full consecration. Let there be no thought of what our friends or our neighbors are doing, or of what they may think of what we are doing. May we forget everyone but thyself; and be thou the most real presence here. May our bringing of the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in thine house, open for us the windows of heaven that thou mayest pour us out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. We take thee at thy word. Amen."

There was no sermon. For the sake of those who might not have been present in the morning, Mr. Stanton made a brief statement of the purpose of the service, and that which had led to the postponement of the offering. Then he said:

"Each one who wishes to make an offering may do so with the utmost privacy by using one of the envelopes which have been placed in the pews; but, as all will wish to give something, there can be no harm, and there may be some advantage, in dispensing with the baskets, and having each one come in turn to the chest which has been placed before the pulpit, to deposit his offering. If the experiences of any during this day have been of such a character as might prove helpful to others, an opportunity will be afforded them to relate these experiences when making their offerings. And if

any are disposed to offer their lives for the Lord's work, let that fact also be written on paper, to be dropped in the treasury. But let us all know of it for our inspiration.

"As it is fitting that I, your pastor, be an example to the church, permit me to make my offering first. It is twofold. As I have already intimated, acting under a conviction which I cannot escape, I am offering my life for foreign mission service, to go into that work unless the board considers me too old, or otherwise disqualified for the service. You will have no serious difficulty in securing another pastor, while the board is unable to secure half the men it needs, and the fields are white to the harvest. But while this matter is pending, I cannot go on living in the delightful manse you have provided for us, with all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, and giving as little as I have given for the salvation of those who are in heathen darkness. So long as we remain here, my wife and I purpose to make ourselves responsible for the salaries of two native helpers, and for the support of a native boy and girl in Christian schools. To these latter objects our children will also contribute as they may be able.

"Now let us for the time being dismiss the thoughts which may arise in connection with my proposal to leave this church, which has grown so dear to me, and proceed with our offerings. Will the elders of the church first make their offerings?"

CHAPTER III

ABSOLUTE stillness, and a seriousness which profoundly impressed even the curious sight-seer, reigned throughout the church for a moment after the pastor had ceased speaking and remained standing at the desk. Then there arose from one of the front pews and moved forward to the treasury the oldest member of the session, Elder Stanhope, his white head a crown of glory, and his voice still strong and clear in spite of his nearly fourscore years, as he spoke with measured words and evidently intense feeling:

“Fellow-Christians, as it was proper for our pastor, as the chief overseer of the flock, to set us all an example in the declaration of his renewed and enlarged purposes of consecration to the service of our blessed Master, so it is proper that I, the oldest of the under-shepherds, should be the next to declare how profoundly I have been moved by the events and the thoughts of this day. I could, with great personal satisfaction, fervently repeat the ‘Nunc Dimittis,’ and go to my eternal rest in peace, having in deed and truth seen this day the Lord Christ, were it not for the feeling, which has pressed upon me with overwhelming force to-day, that I have been an unprofitable servant, an unfaithful steward; and that I must beg the permission of my merciful Master to remain

here in this world a little while longer,—instead of departing to be with Christ, which is far better,—in order that I may have opportunity to set right, in some small measure, the wrongs of my stewardship. If I live in the possession of my intellectual powers until to-morrow night, the members of my family who may survive me will be the poorer by that portion of my goodly estate which should have been in the hands of the Lord for his own work long ago; but they will be the richer by the memory of an old man a hundredfold happier than he has ever been in his long life before, because he will have paid his honest debts, instead of transferring his estate to others to avoid the payment.

“It is not necessary for me to proclaim here the amount for which I am placing pledges in the treasury: it is enough to say that, if our pastor leaves us to go to the foreign field, the income of my offering will be sufficient to maintain him there as one of the foreign pastors of this church. I say ‘one,’ for I believe that under the impulse of the vision which we have seen to-day almost as vividly as our pastor, we shall be able to support representatives in more than one field, at home and abroad.

“There is one thing that troubles me, for it is a wrong that I have no power to set right. My children are all grown. Of not one of them am I ashamed; but not one of them is in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ; not one has given his life to missionary service; and now they are all past age. May God forgive me that I never urged

them to consider that service, because I too lightly esteemed it, and because I feared the sacrifice for them and possible partings for myself. But I have grandchildren, and I feel to-night that no greater joy could come to me than the decision of some of them to heed the call of the world's greatest need. I have never been opposed to foreign missions; I have believed in the work, spoken for it, and supported it—in that absurdly inadequate way in which the church has been so generally sustaining it; but I cannot face this treasury, and see my Lord in very deed sitting beside it, and continue to contribute the insignificant fraction of the reserve of my income which I have been in the habit of contributing. O friends, it is good to come out into the larger light before the mind loses its sensitiveness to that light. I bless God for this day!"

So deep was the agitation of the venerable and beloved elder as he spoke these words and dropped his pledge into the treasury that tears sprang unbidden to many eyes.

Then rose Elder Preston, a man of sixty, wiry, nervous,—fussy, some called him,—and inclined to be close. He was by no means so well-to-do as Elder Stanhope, nor was he so well-beloved. He also walked forward to the treasury, hesitated, swaying from one foot to the other, and finally burst out:

"Brethren,—if you will let me call you by that name,—there isn't a meaner man on the face of the earth than I feel myself to be to-night. Here

I am, an elder in the Presbyterian Church, a fairly successful business man, able to live in comfort, though not what one would call wealthy in these days; yet I am compelled to say to you here to-night that I have only given about two dollars per year to the biggest work the church has to do, the work of making Jesus Christ known to millions of heathen. I have just waked up to the realization that it would take about a million years to do it, if everyone gave at that rate; and that meanwhile I am doing just about my level best to keep Christ out of his kingdom.

“But to tell the truth, I never before saw Christ passing the collection plate on Foreign Mission Sunday. I never thought of him taking up my two-dollar bill, and looking at it and then at me, as if he wanted to set me to thinking where I had put the other four thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight dollars he had given me that year. I just freed my conscience of the heathen for another year; and when the monthly concerts came around, if I was present, I just settled back in my seat in the comfortable assurance that I had paid in advance for that year, and the appeals for help did not mean me. I would have been ashamed to give nothing; but that peace of conscience was the cheapest thing I ever bought,—and the dearest. It was not even worth what it cost, for it was like spending two dollars a year to buy leanness for my own soul. I always skipped the kind of missionary articles that get on the nerves of a stingy man, the

pathetic appeals for men and money; but kind of enjoyed the sort that tell about the customs of the people, and give the statistics of converts from heathenism, for those made my miserable little two dollars seem to swell to about two hundred dollars; and I felt as if some of those converts were really mine. But I tell you, brethren and sisters, that two dollars didn't look much like two hundred dollars this morning; it looked a great deal more like the 'thirty cents' we sometimes hear about on the street.

"I am getting pretty well along in years now, and I can't make up for the years that are gone; but I am going to do something in that direction, and the Board of Foreign Missions may count on me for one thousand dollars a year as long as I am prospered as I am now; and perhaps we can fix it so that the subscription may go on after I am dead. As you know, I am just a plain, blunt man, and not much of a speech-maker; but I want you to know that this is both the saddest and the happiest day of my life."

And with the first tears in his eyes that anyone present had ever seen there, he slipped in his pledge and took his seat.

In order of seniority, it had now come to the elder who had figured in John Stanton's vision the night before; and the pastor wondered whether that vision was to be fulfilled. He had delicately handled this portion of his vision in narrating it, fearing, on the one hand, to deprive his people of any good

influence of a message which seemed so truly from God, and dreading, on the other hand, either to overinfluence or to offend the elder in question. He had not long to wait, for Elder Austin arose and came forward, saying:

“Friends, destinies are in the making here to-night, and among them my own. However delicately our pastor tried to conceal the fact this morning, I presume it was as clear to you as it was to me that I was the elder whom he saw in his vision, for I believe it was a God-given vision, rather than any dream in the ordinary sense. I have been a regular attendant at church, and endeavored to be a faithful member of the session; but I have never believed in foreign missions. It would be a very difficult matter to tell why; but I think the chief reason must have been that my religion has been more a thing of the head than the heart; my knowledge of Jesus Christ has been one of study and not one of personal contact; and I have never come into such sympathetic touch with him as to be able to see things from his point of view. If anyone had asked me if I thought the heathen were to have any share in the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ, I should probably have said: ‘Yes, I suppose that Christ died for them also, and some day they will be reached by the gospel; but now is the day of opportunity and responsibility in our own great land, where there are millions of practical heathen, toward whom we have a patriotic as well as a religious obligation.

Their number is being increased every year by immigration and birth, and the church is not beginning to keep pace with this great work. Let the children first be fed before the bread is thrown to the dogs. All the religious forces of the country combined are not sufficient to make a thoroughly Christian land of this; so why should we trouble ourselves about the other side of the world? Not only charity, but also evangelization, should begin at home.' So I argued with myself, and with many another who has asked my opinion, and never till this morning did I realize, as our pastor said, 'the suicidal selfishness of such a programme.'

"For the first time I have to-day thanked God that he would not permit the early disciples to sink into the rut of any such theory, that he used persecution and miracle and supernatural vision and dream to lead or compel them to go out, and send out, to other lands, while as yet the work in their own land was only in its infancy. Had he not done so, there is no manner of possibility that you and I should now be enjoying the liberties and blessings of a Christian land, or the possession of Christian truth for this life and hope for the life to come. Moreover, I looked about me, and saw that what makes the men of power in the church is not the 'smug provincialism' which sees only America and her people, and seeks only her prosperity, and which logically would confine itself to its own village, its own family, its own exaggerated self; but the world-wide sympathy and effort.

“Who are the men and women whom you and I really most revere and love in this church? Are they those who are doing nothing for foreign missions? We all know that they are not. I have no doubt at all that I should have proved twice as useful a church member and elder, and have given three times what I have to home missions, if I had not narrowed my heart down to the smaller conception of Christ’s commission to his church. With Christ sitting over against the treasury, the work of my conversion did not take very long; but my thinking could not stop there. Although it is the Sabbath, I think God will forgive me for having spent a good part of the day over figures. When this church was built, I gladly put twenty thousand dollars into it, that our little company of the elect might have a beautiful and comfortable church home, and that the small section of the city for which we are chiefly responsible might be attracted here rather than to other churches. When Calvin University needed a new gymnasium and swimming tank, I gave them fifty thousand dollars for it, that the boys of my alma mater might show up well in intercollegiate sports; and, as you know, I built a library for the town at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars. At the same time I was investing certain other thousands in the factories and railroads in which I am interested; and have had in each case the satisfaction of knowing that I was either helping my fellow-men, or contributing to my own material welfare. Meanwhile I have

given one hundred dollars per year to home missions, as much more to local charities, and not one cent to foreign missions. And there is many another who is doing just this sort of thing, and letting his humanitarian efforts, the architecture of beautiful buildings, and the music of expensive choirs, lull his soul into a self-congratulation and satisfaction for which there is no warrant in the word of God. These things ought I to have done, but not have left the other undone.

"And let me tell you, my friends, that those things which we have left undone must be done on the same business principles, the same generous scale, on which these things which we have done are regularly done, or we shall never overtake the work which has been given us to do. I was reading this afternoon of a mission station in China, where there are fifteen missionaries, including wives, at work for two million people; and the total sum given them for the maintenance of two churches, two hospitals, two dispensaries, a boys' boarding school of seventy pupils, a kindergarten, a theological seminary, evangelistic itineration and station work for men and women, five day schools for children, ten country chapels, and the salaries of preachers, colporteurs, Bible-women and teachers to the number of thirty, is three thousand five hundred dollars! One school alone would require several times that amount here at home. Of course, labor of all kinds is cheaper and living is lower; but, friends, do we think for a moment that the world

is going to be evangelized by expenditure on that scale? Single men give their ten to thirty millions for single home enterprises, while all that more than a million and a quarter of Presbyterians can scrape together for the evangelization of hundreds of millions who sit in darkness and the shadow of death is an average of one dollar apiece!

“I tell you, friends, I was educated for business almost from my first lisp, and it does not take two minutes of a business man’s time to see, without the shadow of a doubt, that we are not administering the kingdom of God on business principles. Is it possible that we are saying to ourselves, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah,’ so we need not bring business principles to bear upon this work? If so, may God forgive the wickedness of our selfish withholding, and the greater wickedness of our untrue and unholy excuse! Was there ever a business which so insistently demanded the application of business principles as ‘the King’s business’? Was there ever a steward who dared to say to his monarch, as an excuse for the slack performance of his duty, ‘O King, thou art all powerful: thy servant did not think it necessary to do anything’? But that is just what I have been saying to my King, and the wonder is that he has used me at all in spite of it.

“I have come to a very definite conclusion, friends, and that is that I, for one, am going to do business with and for my Lord, on the same principles, the same scale, which have made me what

you call a prosperous man. From this time forth, I propose to give to the work of foreign missions annually, at least as much as I spend on the living of myself and family; and, that I may do at least a little toward righting the uneven balance of the past, I propose at once to endow that theological seminary in China, to which I have referred, to the extent of one hundred thousand dollars. This is all I am in a position to do now; but, if my life is spared, this is not the end. It is but poor atonement for the selfish, narrow, foolish past. Why should not the Lord's work have some of the millions? Why should these millions all be spent on the things which, directly or indirectly, minister to ourselves and our nearest neighbors, while the Board of Foreign Missions reports a deficit of one hundred and seventy thousand dollars, and the church talks retrenchment? The church shall not retrench this year, if I have to sell at a sacrifice and make good the whole deficit myself!"

His best friends could hardly recognize Elder Austin, as, contrary to all precedent, he poured forth this torrent of eloquent self-denunciation, resolution and appeal, while the perspiration streamed from his brow in the intensity of his feeling. A revolution had been truly wrought in the man in the course of a single day.

It was now the turn of Elder Wentworth; and a man of fifty, tall, slender, dressed neatly, but in clothing which had evidently seen the wear of many seasons, arose; a quiet, unassuming man,

yet one of the strongest spiritual factors in the church, and one to whom both pastor and people turned for all manner of sympathy and suggestion. Little had he of silver or gold to give, but such as he had he gave with a liberality and an evident pleasure which had always made it seem far more than it really was. A believer in Christian missions of every kind he had always been; and out of his meager income he had always found something annually for every board of the church. Indeed, it was believed that it was his generous interest in everyone else which had kept him poor. Sickness in his family and unfortunate investments had contributed their share, and he was really one of the poorest men in the church.

Happy as the day is long, his face fairly beamed with delight as he now stepped to the front and faced the congregation, saying:

“Well, friends, I knew that there was a good day coming for our beloved church. Sometimes it used to seem as if we were dead set against getting the best out of life by our insisting on getting the most out of it, and were just paying down enough, as we thought, to hold on to reserved seats in heaven, while we ate, drank and were merry here. The Lord never let me be tempted, as he has some of you, with much of this world’s goods; perhaps because he knew he could not trust me with more than a small share; but I doubt if any of the wealthy men in this church have gotten more satisfying pleasure out of their

much than I have out of my little. I have never envied one of them before now; but the strange thing about my joy to-night is that, for the first time in my life, I have a feeling of envy toward my brethren. I never felt any inclination to envy them the money they spent on themselves or their families, or the money they laid up, or even the money they have given for colleges and libraries. But to-night I just do, envy them their power to put their hands into their pockets and take out a missionary for Korea, a theological seminary for China, a doctor for Africa and a college for India, and feel that when that thrill is past they can afford another one by doing it again.

“O brethren, that is a kind of pleasure, a kind of luxury, that I can never expect to enjoy; but in spite of that unavoidable heart-hunger at the very thought of being able to do such things, I am just about bursting with joy at the knowledge that they are to be done, and that my old friends and colleagues are going to have the joy of doing them. And I am not going to be left out entirely. My wife and I have been talking the matter over this afternoon, and we believe that we can both pull through another winter without the new clothing for which we have been saving lately; and we are going to treat ourselves to a scholarship in that theological seminary, if one of them happens to be left unprovided for by the generosity of Brother Austin. This is to be over and above any little gifts we have been in the habit

of making to foreign missions, and it is just to celebrate the coming of the good times to the church in Jaconsett in answer to many hopes and prayers. Our Master has certainly visited us in person. May it be to remain with us as evidently real as he seemed this morning!"

With another of his radiant smiles, which always awoke a general response, this well-loved elder resumed his seat.

Elder Ogden promptly took his place. A comparatively young man, about forty years of age, very successful in his practice as a lawyer, he and his wife were leading spirits in the social life of the church, and also in the Sabbath school, where each conducted a large class. As they were general favorites, their influence was large, and it had been a source of much grief to the pastor that these young people, whom he found so congenial in almost every way, did not appear to be deeply spiritually minded, and in particular were without interest in other than the local work of the church, their regard for which seemed to be somewhat that of a man for his club. Yet so clean was Lawyer Ogden's record, and so great was the popularity both of himself and his wife with the young people of the church, that Mr. Stanton had not felt justified in opposing the suggestion of his election as an elder, though he rather trembled for the Ark of God when committed to his care.

Though Elder Ogden maintained his usual command of himself this evening, yet it was evi-

dent to all, before he began speaking, that something new and strange had come into his life that day.

"Friends," he began, "lawyers are supposed to know how to talk, at any time and on any side of a subject, and I have been in the habit of congratulating myself on the possession of, perhaps, an unusual degree of readiness in the use of the English language. I must confess that it has forsaken me to-night, and that I would much rather keep my mouth entirely closed. It makes a big difference in the fluency of a man's speech whether he is looking to his own honor or to his own shame; and the latter is all that I am likely to achieve to-night, for, like some who have preceded me, I have a confession to make. But my confession is a sadder one than theirs, for I have been, in plain words, a renegade, a turncoat, and that in the matter of the use of a whole life. I would have given anything to escape being made an elder in this church, because I knew that I was not worthy. Yet, as it would almost surely help me in the practice of my profession to hold that position, and as I could not refuse it without offending good friends in the church, I accepted the election, and have tried to make as good an elder as a man with an unrepented heart-wrong could make. You have been kindly indulgent, because you saw the effort and did not know the whole story.

"I have for eighteen years been unfaithful to a

vow. I was among the earliest of the regular student volunteers, having formed the decision in my sophomore year at college. I was an active, earnest Christian at that time, and a summer spent in Bible study at Mt. Hermon had convinced me that, so great was the disproportion between the forces sent to the foreign field and those retained at home, the burden was on every man who was free and able to go as a missionary to prove why he should not do so. There was no romance about this for me, no excitement; but the calm, deliberate conviction that, as I was both free and able to go, and as there was a desperate need, I must and would go, unless the providence of God stepped very clearly in the way. To this conviction I adhered firmly to the end of my senior year, deriving neither great elation nor great depression from my volunteer decision, but doing what I could to secure other decisions from fellow-students, and succeeding in a number of cases because the cold logic of the situation was irresistible when constantly brought to bear upon the minds of thinking men in student intercourse.

"I planned to enter the theological seminary that autumn. For a good, thorough rest, I took a summer, roughing it in the Adirondacks, with two or three classmates and some good friends from the previous class, who had taken their first years of professional studies and were eager for a good holiday. We did not propose anything violent, even in the way of exercise, but just to

enjoy nature and one another. We spent our evenings about a big camp fire, and discussed many things, past, present and future, realistic and idealistic, no doubt talking some wisdom and a great deal of foolishness. I had taken good rank in debate while in college, and, I suppose, must have become a sort of leader in these discussions in the woods, for the fellows applauded me more vigorously than they did anyone else. At last one night a fellow who had been attending a New York law school cried out:

“That’s a master argument, Ned, my boy; and I don’t believe there’s a man in our class at Columbia who could come anywhere near it on the spur of the moment. You were cut out for a lawyer, and no mistake. Don’t be so preposterously idiotic as to hide that talent of yours in a missionary napkin out in the wilds of Africa. There are hosts of poor pettifoggers in the law; but there’s lots of room at the top, and that’s where you’ll get without half trying. It is true that it takes logic and eloquence to make a successful minister; and I suppose even the cannibals would rather listen to an orator than to a tombstone; but there are varieties of logic and eloquence, and if I ever saw a born lawyer, you are one.’

“At first I simply pooh-poohed at the fulsome flattery and the effort to switch me off; but that fellow kept at me most persistently; and one night there walked into our camp Professor

Bailey of Columbia Law School, one of Maxon's teachers, whom, as I learned afterwards, Maxon had, since our first talk, coaxed to come over from another part of the woods for my especial benefit. Suffice it to say that flattery and cajolery and brilliantly painted impressionistic visions of my rich and honored future proved too much for the decision, which had ever been rather of my intellect than of my heart, and I entered Columbia Law School in the fall, instead of entering Auburn Theological Seminary.

"Most of the results you know. A moderate measure of riches and honor has already come to me. With no so-called 'bad habits,' I have yet lived a gay society life, really more to drown the frequently troublesome voice of conscience than from any great love for worldly things. In spite of this uneasiness, I have never deeply regretted my change of mind, from the first year in law school, when I resolutely stifled one or two fierce protests of conscience, until to-day. But to-day, in the presence of the Lord sitting by the treasury, I have seen my life in a new light, and loathed myself as one who has deliberately turned from a life of unselfish devotion to God and my fellow-men to a life of selfish devotion to his own earthly advantage and material enjoyment. I know that our pastor has mourned over my lack of spirituality, and has feared for the influence of my worldliness on the young people of the church; but I do not suppose that he has ever suspected

that it was all due to heart-unrest, the result of the deliberate breaking of a right and wise promise made to my God and Saviour. I had yielded to the constraint of ambition and resisted the constraint of the love of Christ. The mistake which our pastor has acknowledged is similar, yet not the same. It may be that personal ambition entered into his decision to remain at home, but it did not fill his whole heart, as it did mine. It was a choice with him of two fields of work for Christ, while with me the choice was between Christ and self."

"Don't say that, Brother Ogden!" cried out Mr. Stanton. "My choice was as really and fully a choice of self as was yours, for Christ, my own personal Christ, was leading to the foreign field, and I would not follow."

"Well, my dear pastor, however that may be, you find room for repentance, while I fear I shall not. If there is any field where you want a missionary lawyer, here am I, Lord, send me; or if there is any place where you want a self-supporting, converted lawyer as a preacher, here am I, Lord, send me. If I am not wanted out there, the best atonement I can make is to see to it that all the money that I make, over and above moderate living expenses, goes to the work of saving men, and that my personal influence tells in the same direction. Do not misunderstand me, and draw the inference that I believe no man is called of God to be a lawyer, or can largely glorify

God in that profession. Far from it; but I believe that my calling to the law was strictly human, and that many another lawyer ought to have been in the ministry.

“This has been a long speech, friends; but it had to be made. May God forgive me my broken vow! I pray you to forgive me my cumbering of the ground as elder, and my worldly example.”

So saying, he dropped his pledge into the treasury and took his seat.

CHAPTER IV

NO one looked at clock or watch; it was evident that all waited for further manifestations of the presence and power of the living Christ. To the surprise of everyone, the next person to rise was the pastor's wife. Not often had her voice been heard in general meetings. Quiet, unassuming, she had been, nevertheless, a power in the congregation.

"My husband," she said, "has taken to himself all the blame for changed plans in our life; but I want to tell you that I think he would have been in China to-day had it not been for me. My father and mother believed in foreign missions, just as a great many others do—for other people than their own sons and daughters. They both contributed to missions and kept themselves informed on the subject; but my first suggestion of going myself as a missionary was met with amazement, almost amounting to indignation, and with stern refusal to listen to such a proposition. My father said:

" 'Why, my dear daughter, you are not fitted for that sort of life; that is for those who are endowed with unusual powers of endurance, and especially for those who have not such home ties as you have. We could never be easy about you for a moment, and it would shorten our lives by many years if you should go to China. We can never give our

consent to your marriage with John Stanton if it involves such a separation. He may be meant for a missionary, though we think he is really more needed here; but you certainly were not meant for a missionary's wife.'

"In vain I pleaded that the wife's home should be where her husband felt called to go; that I had scarcely had a sick day in my life; that my parents were in no real sense dependent on me, having several other children equally ready and able to care for them; that I was freer than nine out of ten to go and quite as able to endure hardness as nine out of ten on the field. My parents' minds were set like a flint against the idea; and I could not move them. When it came to my decision, I simply could not bear to go against their will in this matter, so I persuaded my affianced husband to accept the call offered him in this country, as Providence seemed to stand in the way of our going to China.

"My father, a noble Christian man in other respects, is still living, and will, I presume, still be bitterly opposed to our going; but as I see the matter to-day, I am very certain that, when it is simply a question of sentiment with parents, and not one of actual dependence, the duty to Jesus Christ should stand first. It seems to me that otherwise one is simply loving father and mother more than Jesus Christ, and is so far unworthy to be called his disciple. I know there are many who do not like to hear that doctrine preached; but

what did Jesus mean, if he did not mean that? I have many times heard people try to answer that question; I have tried all these years to answer it myself; and the answers have all been unsatisfying. I have loved father and mother more than him, and have not been worthy of him. And does it not strike you as queer that Christian fathers and mothers are willing to have their sons and daughters go to distant lands for diplomatic careers, or to make fortunes, or even to marry some foreigner of rank or family, while they see absolutely insurmountable obstacles in the way of their becoming foreign ambassadors for Christ? Excuse me, friends, if I get warmed up on this subject, or seem to speak disrespectfully of my dear parents; but I have been debating it so unhappily for years, convicted but not converted, that now, when the conversion has swept through me like a flood, I can see all the inconsistencies of the old position, and shall pray for power to convince my father that I do not love him less because I love my Saviour more. I am ready to go with my husband wherever and whenever the Lord may call him. It would be a joy to remain here with you, who have become a part of our lives; but it will also be a joy to take the gospel to those who sit in darkness."

She resumed her seat, and the pastor spoke:

"These words from Mrs. Stanton's heart will have their own power with you, I am sure; but, in her desire to be honorable, she has taken too much blame to herself. Had I not been wavering

in my own mind over the question of staying at home, I should have done far more than I ever attempted to do to persuade her to go, knowing well that her parents were not, in any real sense, dependent on her. I was all too ready to accept her parents' opposition as a providential hindrance.

"We have already passed the usual hour for closing our service, friends; but I can see that you do not wish to stop here. Let us take a little time longer to hear what the Lord has been saying to our hearts to-day; and then, if there is still more to be said, as I imagine there will be, we can adjourn until Wednesday evening. Have any of our deacons a message for us?"

The portly form of Deacon Ransom rose from the middle of the house and came forward.

"I believe," he said, "the office of deacon was originally the serving of tables, that other people might eat, and run to their preaching or their teaching; and I've been wondering to-day if the deacons hadn't gotten so absorbed in the business of table-waiting that they have given up the work of teaching and preaching for good and all, and have forgotten the records about Stephen and Philip, who seemed to be so full of the Holy Spirit that they had to serve a dish of gospel with every sandwich, and put in all their time between meals doing the evangelistic jobs that the apostles didn't get around to. Just think of the work that Deacon Philip did up there in Samaria—foreign missionary work before the church had learned that

foreign missions was its business! Just as like as not the apostles would have felt a bit uncertain about the wisdom of casting their pearls before those despised Samaritans, in spite of all the Lord has said about their giving points to the Jews; but Deacon Philip, he hadn't any finicky notions. Got driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, and had to flee to Samaria, where they hadn't any need for deacons just then, not having reached the table-serving stage. But they needed the gospel about as bad as anyone could, and there were no apostles round to give it to them; and he felt that if the deacons didn't turn foreign missionaries, there was a great lot of those poor, ignorant people who were going to die in their sins. It didn't seem much in his line at first; but there was a big hole there, and he had the stuff to fill it; so he simply dropped the tables and the widows and the orphans that he couldn't serve just then, and went to serving the souls that he could. And he proved such a mighty good soul-server that when the Holy Spirit wanted a special commissioner to get the gospel planted in Africa, he just called Philip aside and made him an apostle to that influential Ethiopian eunuch. I tell you, my friends, I'm not another Philip, but I'm magnifying my office since I saw my Lord this morning. I'm too old to be sent as a missionary to Africa or China, or any other foreign land; but I'm not going to let myself be so taken up with looking after the temporalities of the church here in Jaconsett that I can't carry the gospel

myself to all within reach, or send others to carry it to those out of my reach. I'm not a rich man, but I'm going to support at least a single apostle to the heathen as long as God gives me the means."

The rough and ready speech of the good deacon was a bit of a relief to the intensity of what had preceded, while indicating an equally common-sense application of the day's thought.

The pastor was meditating an adjournment to Wednesday evening, when an evidently very much agitated young man, the son of Elder Austin, arose and came forward.

"My pastor and friends," he said, "perhaps it is not my turn to speak yet, for there are older deacons and men older than I to be heard; but I feel that I must free my mind of a very great burden before this meeting closes. My father saw at once his portrait in the story of our pastor's vision. Strange to say, I had not seen mine at all until my father spoke this evening. But it was there as plain as day, and it was not the work of our pastor, but of the Spirit of God; that I verily believe. I was interested this morning, but the vision did not take a very strong hold upon me, chiefly, perhaps, for the reason that I have grown up to despise everything of the nature of superstition, and have not believed that, in our day, one hundred dreams of the night are worth one hour's wide-awake meditation of the day. I came here to-night expecting to hear some of the more emotional or nervous

people narrate other visions, or make some extravagant resolutions which would not be kept for a month; and really anticipated more amusement than anything else from the meeting. And this in spite of the profound respect which I feel for our sincere and most useful pastor.

“But the awakening has come. As one after another of our honored elders, our pastor’s wife and Deacon Ransom, have spoken with the earnestness of deep conviction, of the mistakes of the past and the new resolves for the future, at once put into execution, the feeling has grown stronger and stronger within me that I have been facing life in an altogether wrong spirit. I have called myself a Christian; but Christ has occupied by no means the first place in my life. If I could do something for him without taking too much time from things more important (as I unwittingly accounted them), or more agreeable, without sacrificing too much of the culture and position which have been my aim, I have done it, and taken credit to myself for everything of the kind, as if it were conferring a favor on my Lord. How hollow it all seems now! What a travesty on a profession of religion! If I had died to-day, it is possible that I might have been saved in the goodness and mercy of God; but it would have been ‘so as through fire,’ and I should have gone empty-handed to the presence of him who gave himself for me. It is amazing how intensely, absolutely selfish a man can be, and remain totally ignorant of it, considering himself filled with

noble ambitions and devoted to the reformation of the world. Many of you know to what I have been looking forward,—to the same kind of career as that in which Elder Ogden has made so distinguished, yet apparently so unsatisfying a success,—backed up by the same sort of flattering friends that backed him up. I was going to add one more to the long list of lawyers, when the world would get along quite as well if the present number were reduced by three fourths, as I have been told by men prominent in the profession. Not that the law is not a good profession: a thoroughly good Christian lawyer may do a great deal of good; but there is a fierce competition among them, and a consequent temptation to gradually drop out the ‘thoroughly’ and the ‘good,’ if not also the ‘Christian,’ in the race for the prizes of the profession, or even for a self-supporting practice.

“Another thing that has struck me to-day is that thought which I have pondered over and over. Is it indeed true that the large majority of those who go as missionaries are the children of the comparatively poor; while those who have been brought up in comfort, and have now the means of supporting themselves independently of their professions, rarely feel themselves called to take up this work? If it be true,—and the more I consider it, the more I fear it is true,—is there any possible excuse for it? Any relieving feature of the situation which can prevent our shame and disgrace at the judgment seat of Christ? Have we been so pampered

and indulged that it has enervated our manhood, and made us incapable of self-denial, of enduring hardship? Or have we in reality rather despised the name of missionary as one fitted for the man who cannot hope for anything higher, who cannot command the world's admiration by reason of his social position or the superior culture acquired through unlimited means? I confess, friends, that the longer I look at it, the worse it seems, to think that the churches and our Master have to look to the men of small means, and very largely to the graduates of our smaller colleges, and particularly those in the west, for the supply of ambassadors for Christ to foreign lands. It is a condition which I have accepted without thought, as quite a matter of course, until to-night it impresses itself upon me as another piece of insufferable snobbishness, not to call it by worse names; and I am heartily ashamed of myself for permitting it to have any part in my attitude toward this matter.

"Is it possible that I could for a moment regard it as a waste of time and talents for me to follow my Master in this work? As our pastor asked, Who gave me the time and the strength and the talents, and for what purpose? The lawyers may congratulate themselves on having one less competitor for the fat fees and the political preferment. I am going to Korea, where the people are begging for more missionaries, or to China, where they are not begging for them, but need them quite as badly, to teach those people a higher, a purer, a better

law than any on our statute books, even the law from which all the best that is in those books has come. And my going shall never cost the church one cent. The money with which God has blessed me has indeed been in danger of cursing me; but it shall be so no longer. I did not see Christ this morning; but I have seen him this evening; and life is a different thing."

No more impressive speech had been made than that of this rich young man, who did not go away sorrowful, although he had great possessions. His father had blanched at the first suggestion of the son's intention to turn aside from the family's ambitious plans and give himself to mission work; but that father had himself been too truly converted to-day to utter or even think one protest; and the willing sacrifice was laid on the altar, while Mr. Stanton offered a word of closing prayer:

"O Master, we know thee better to-night than we have ever known thee before, and we love thee better. The vision of thee has so filled our eyes and our minds and our hearts as to blot out and to cast out a multitude of things which we have hitherto regarded as precious, until we have come with Paul to count them but dung that we may win Christ and be found in him. This is thy holy temple: here we have built our altar of sacrifice, and upon it we have laid ourselves, our strength, our talents, our time, our wealth, our poverty, all that makes up our lives. Send down the fire, O Lord, from heaven, and prove thine acceptance of

our offering and of us; and may that fire be purity and strength and glory in our lives henceforth, as we daily practice the presence of the living Christ, and grow into the fullness of his likeness. In his name, Amen."

At the close of this simple prayer, the pastor suggested that, not for the sake of parade, but to make the idea of offering to the present Lord as real as possible, all who desired to present money or pledges or service should come forward in orderly manner and place their offerings in the treasury now, reserving for another evening any further narratives of experience or testimony as to new convictions. There was scarcely one in the house, even down to the smallest child, who did not gladly respond; and it required no counting of the contents to assure pastor and people that the chest contained many times as much as it had ever contained before. After the benediction there was far more animated conversation than there had been in the morning; but through it all could readily be detected a tone of earnestness and a tone of gladness such as nothing but a new acquaintance with Jesus Christ and with the realities of life could have produced. It seemed to John Stanton as if he had lived a year in a day; but he went home with a light heart, and with less prospect of a "blue Monday" than he had since the beginning of his ministry.

"I never have admired or loved you as much as I have to-day," said his wife, as they walked home

together. "You have not been, and I will not be, disobedient to the heavenly vision."

"And the strangest thing about it," he replied, "is that, after all our Lord said about his constant presence, we should need to have such a vision to make him real, and to make the duties and privileges of life real!"

CHAPTER V

IT is hardly necessary to say that the chief topic of conversation in the city of Jaconssett, for the next three days, was the remarkable events of the Sabbath in the Westminster Church, more especially when it transpired, as the pastor had not intended it should, that the annual offering of the church to foreign missions, instead of being about five hundred dollars, ranged well over ten thousand dollars, without counting Elder Austin's proposed endowment of the theological seminary; and that the number of missionary volunteers from the congregation could not be counted on the fingers of two hands. Some were sincerely alarmed lest the church should be impoverished, or various forms of Christian work languish, through the drawing off of so many Christian workers! The old cry was raised: "Wherefore this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor here at home?" There were indeed certain members of the Home Missionary Society of Westminster Church who felt morally certain that they would be unable to raise their usual fifteen hundred dollars for that board, to say nothing of the other boards. (It actually turned out afterward that, without special effort, simply as the result of the new realization of the presence of Christ, the society raised five thousand

dollars, and every other board benefited in like manner. Hundreds of the members of the church had simply come to realize, what they had long believed and indefinitely aspired to, that to them to live was Christ, and so, as a matter of course, all Christ's work was their work, and their money was Christ's money. But this was only the after-out-working of the new spirit; and, as a matter of fact, so far as the members of that church were concerned, the new spirit had taken possession of so large a majority of them that there was no grumbling, no envy, no apprehensions of losses, no slightest suggestion of waste.)

As to the members of other churches, and the outside world, they were curious, skeptical, envious, or apprehensive, as the case might be. Mr. Stanton felt sorry for the prospects of the other pastors on the Wednesday evening, as it required no prophet to foresee that the prayer-meeting room at Westminster would be altogether too small to hold the people, who, from interest or curiosity, would gather to see and hear any later developments of the new idea in foreign missions. So he told the sexton to open the main auditorium for the evening, and, as he had anticipated, there gathered even a larger company than on the Sabbath evening, including not a few of the usual prayer-meeting attendants at neighboring churches, who had felt warranted by the startling character of the reports which had come to them in absenting themselves for once from their usual places of worship.

Indeed, one neighboring pastor, interested for himself and for his people, and anticipating very small attendance at his own church, had posted a notice that he and his people would attend the service at Westminster, instead of holding their own meeting. And so the church was as full as it had ever been since its dedication.

After an opening hymn had been sung, and portions of Second Corinthians, eighth and ninth chapters, read, Mr. Stanton offered a prayer in the simple, direct style which had already become habitual with him in his new realization of Christ's constant presence:

"Our heavenly Father, we owe thee everything, and we have given thee very little. We have belonged to thee, and yet have counted our lives and possessions as belonging to ourselves. Thou hast sought to reveal thyself to us, and we have been dull and obtuse, and have not seen thee. Thou hast called us, and the din of earth's machinery, the clang of the world's cymbals, have so filled our ears that we have not heard thee. Thou hast tried to guide us to thy glory and our own present and everlasting happiness, and we have preferred the guidance of our sin-biased senses. Thou hast sent us into thy vineyard, and we have hung about the gate, reluctant to bear the burden and heat of the day, or waiting for special orders as to the place where we shall work, while the overripe clusters are dropping from the vines. Some of us have said that we would go, yet we went not. Some of us

have plainly refused to be sent, and honored ourselves for our lack of hypocrisy. But now, O Father, our eyes have seen thee, and we abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes. Wilt thou forgive us all the mistakes and the misunderstandings of the past, and make such unhappy conditions impossible for us in all the future by fuller and ever fuller revelations of thyself, and, consequently, of our own hearts, and of the claim of our fellow-men upon us? Thou didst greatly move our hearts on the Sabbath night by the words of strong conviction which came from the lips and hearts of brethren honored among us for their works' sake, who had yet been brought into the presence of new ideals, and so possessed of new ambitions for themselves and for thy kingdom. Grant, O Lord, that tonight we may see yet more abundantly the outpouring of thy grace in the power of thy Spirit. We are here to present ourselves before thee that thou mayest take us as we are and transform us into vessels most meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work. We would see Jesus, and become unconscious of the presence of others. In his name, Amen."

Then followed a brief, unembellished statement of the events of the previous Sabbath, and an invitation to all the members of the church and congregation to express the thoughts which, having proved profitable to them, might also prove profitable to the assembled company. He concluded:

"Most of us made our offerings on Sabbath

evening; but, that we may continue to realize as far as possible that our Lord is sitting by the treasury, watching us most lovingly and longingly, and listening to every word we speak, I have left the treasury in its former place, where it may also serve for the reception of any belated offerings. Who has a burden of regret or of joy which he will permit us to share?"

"I have a burden of both, Mr. Stanton," responded a man of middle age, as he came forward to the treasury. "I have been one of the chronic objectors to every suggestion along the line of foreign missions. I have made every one of those already mentioned on Sunday, and at least a score of others. And every one of them now appears to me to have been nothing less than the old plea, 'I pray thee have me excused.' Not one of them will hold water, yet I have repeated them so often that they had come to appear to me as cold logic. If one of them was answered for me, I could always take refuge in another, and after the discussion was over, those objections that had been knocked out always lived to fight another day.

"There is that objection, 'It takes ninety-nine cents to send one cent to the heathen.' I must have known that it was at least an enormous exaggeration, especially in view of the number of times I had heard it authoritatively contradicted; yet I repeated it on numerous occasions. These last three days I have been looking the matter up, and have discovered that, instead of ninety-nine cents

to send one cent, it actually takes but five to seven cents to send a whole dollar, and that there is no other business in the world, equally extended and many-phased, administered in anything like so economical a manner.

“That is just a sample of the absolute perversion, the wicked distortion, of facts, of which self-excusers like myself are daily guilty. Think of that other objection, which I have rolled as a sweet morsel under my tongue, ‘It is a great waste of funds, and the church and the country cannot afford it.’ My friends, I came across a statement to-day, backed up by statistics, which fairly made my hair stand on end. It was this: ‘Out of every one thousand dollars spent in this country, two hundred and fifty dollars go for food, two hundred and eighteen dollars for clothing, five hundred dollars for intoxicating liquors and tobacco, thirty dollars for other purposes, and two dollars for foreign missions.’ The man who first sees that statement will be disposed to question its truth; but there is abundant evidence for it. Talk about your waste! Five hundred dollars for poison and smoke, and two dollars to send the gospel to millions of heathen! I tell you, friends, it broke me all up; for, while I have not spent my money in just that way, I found, when I went to figuring, that the percentage that I had spent on my own ease and comfort and pleasure and luxury, and the percentage that went to foreign missions were relatively not very far from those figures. It made me feel as if I should like to

reverse the figures for a few years to come; and I wanted to hunt up every man on whom I had ever used that argument and get him to kick me, I felt so mean.

“Did you ever think why the Chinese and the Africans are still worshiping their idols? It has just come over me that it is simply because we are still worshiping ours; that’s all. They call their Buddha or Pusa, or something or other, while ours is the ‘almighty dollar,’ or the good things that dollar will buy. There is a good deal of difference in appearance between their idols and ours, but they don’t begin to squander the time and the heart on theirs that we do on ours. I know it must seem strange to you to hear me talking in this way,—rather like Saul among the prophets; but it’s just come over me like a flood, and I’m not the same man I was last week.

“Then there’s that awful lie about sending so many missionaries abroad that there wouldn’t be anybody left to preach the gospel in America. I’ve looked that up too, and I’ve discovered that one twentieth of the people in the world now have nineteen twentieths of the ministers and Christian workers to look after them, while the other nineteen twentieths of the world have one twentieth of these workers; that even now only one in twenty of our theological graduates is going abroad, and that there are more Methodist ministers in the one city of Chicago than there are in the whole empire of China. And all the time there isn’t a man, woman

or child in America who has not heard, or cannot readily hear, the gospel of Jesus Christ, while more than half the population of China have never heard it at all.

“I’ve no doubt that some of you have heard me say also that the task is absolutely hopeless, so there is no use attempting it. I suspect my partners think I haven’t been giving very close attention to business since Sunday; but I’ve had more important business than selling groceries these days, and that was getting right with God. So I have been studying up this matter too, and I find that, in spite of the way the church has been merely playing at missions, putting the pennies and the nickels into that and the dollars and the eagles into everything else, the work has been blest most wonderfully, so that there is not a mission field on which the proportion of Christians is not increasing more rapidly than the population, while there are many fields in China, Korea, India, the Philippines, and elsewhere, in which whole communities have become Christian; and like the Fiji and Sandwich Islands, which have quite ceased to be heathen. Great movements are on foot in many of these lands which indicate yet more wonderful results in years soon to come. These are critical times in many lands, and ten dollars now may accomplish what nine hundred dollars will not do ten years hence.

“I just want to mention one more of my old stock objections, and then this long speech is ended, and I sit down. I don’t know how many

times I have said it was of no use to send missionaries to the heathen because you couldn't possibly make a good Christian out of a pagan; they were all rice-Christians, and the more rice the more Christian. That also was a lie, for if ever the rice was taken away from a man pretty effectually, it was during that Boxer outbreak out there in China. Yet hundreds of those Christians, without rice, without clothing, without shelter, without friends, without mercy, stood faithful unto death, when a few words, or a simple act of idolatrous worship, would have secured life and mercy and friends and clothing and food—with God's displeasure. Native Christians in other lands have endured similar trials of faith in like fashion. I tell you it makes me ashamed when I think how I have failed to lend a hand to help them, and to make more Christians like them. I wish we had more of that kind of pagans here in America.

"Brethren, I've done. I put into that treasury on Sunday night a hundred times what I've ever given before; but I've learned something since then, so I am going to double it to-night, and may God help Ralph Jackson henceforth to live up to the light that he has as well as many of those converted heathen are doing it."

It was a most excellent beginning, and no one felt regret that Mr. Jackson had used so much time. His speech started Mr. James Waterson to his feet, a man of about the same age, president of one of the banks of Jaconssett.

"Speaking of objections," he began, "that has been my chief relation to the cause of foreign missions until a few months ago; and one of my favorite objections has been that the present policy of the boards is all wrong in two particulars. First, they support the missionaries in altogether too comfortable a style; and, second, they do not exercise sufficient faith in their plans and work. I have always argued, with regard to the first point, that the missionary who goes to Africa should live as the Africans do, and the one who goes to China as the Chinese do, both for purposes of economy, and that thus the natives may easily be won from their own level.

"Well, as you know, I got interested in that new men's movement, when I was urged very hard by friends to visit the foreign missions. As I badly needed a change, and had planned some day to make the grand tour, I scraped together my savings and went along. That trip opened my eyes to a lot of things. At first glance it did seem, in some places, as if the missionaries of some churches were living in a greater degree of comfort than was absolutely necessary, or advantageous to the work; but when one came to study their surroundings, and see the manner of the native living, several things were revealed. In the first place, the proposition that the missionary should live like the ordinary native was relegated at once to the region of impossibilities. The experiment has been tried more than once, and invariably with one or another

of three results—the missionary either died young, was invalided home, perhaps to die there, or found that, with his utmost endeavor, he could not make himself a native, and had to spend at least three or four times the native salary to keep in any measure of health and attain any measure of efficiency. This last outcome at once introduced the whole difficulty of native envy and criticism which the foreign style of living was said to produce, with this further complication, that the native naturally expects the foreign style of living to cost more than his own, and expects the foreigner to live as he would at home, but does not see any good reason why the foreigner who lives like the native should not do it on the same expenditure, and consequently suspects him of unwillingness to practice self-denial. On the other hand, in view of the requirements of the climate in most mission fields, in view of the large amount of entertaining, both of foreigners and natives, which must be done, and in view of the comparative cheapness and inefficiency of the native servants engaged, I came to the conclusion that most of the missionaries and their boards were doing neither an extravagant nor an inexpedient thing in making the standard of living abroad about what it would be if the missionaries were in charge of moderate sized churches at home. Moreover, I think it is high time that we quit thinking that because a man gives up nearly everything of this life to go as a foreign missionary, he should therefore be either required or expected

to give up everything else when he gets there, while the man who stays in America is, by that fact, excused from giving up anything. In the midst of that heathen darkness and vileness and superstition, if anywhere in this wide world, a man would be excusable for surrounding himself with a little of that atmosphere of home comfort and refinement which are so common with us. I have noticed that it always makes a vast difference in a man's ideas on this subject when one of his own family, or a personal friend, goes to the foreign field.

"As to the faith problem, is there any more reason that one board should commission its men and women and send them forth among the heathen with no assurance of an income, than that another board should do the same thing in America? or why the board should be expected to take a stand which the church it represents, and to which it is subject, will not take? It happens that I have run across, in my journeyings, some of the operations of that theory. I knew of one case where a self-styled 'faith missionary,' who was quite in the habit of looking down upon and criticising those who had fixed incomes, because they were trusting to men and not to God, ran out of funds and out of health at the same time. For the sake of her own health and that of a child she was compelled to go to a seaside resort, although she had often severely criticised others for spending time there; was provided there with a house, food and care by missionaries with fixed incomes, and then thanked

the Lord that the principle of faith had triumphed and the Lord had provided for her in answer to prayer! And I knew of another family who received no remittance from their faith mission for many months. Food and clothing were exhausted, funds were absolutely lacking; they ran up long accounts with the trustful heathen dealers in food supplies, and at length, in imminent danger of starving, managed to borrow enough money from the natives to get them to the port, where they threw themselves on the bounty of more definitely provided-for missionaries.

“I am not decrying faith, but simply the sort of faith which divorces itself from sound judgment, and tempts the Lord by going ahead of him. That the church at home is holding the boards and the missionaries and the kingdom of God back by a great lack of true faith, I firmly believe; but we are not going to throw the blame on the board and the missionaries, and be blameless.

“So you see, friends, that a trip around the world, seeing things as they actually are, is quite apt to puncture the objections which have been inflated by frequent blowing to such enormous proportions that they stop the entrance to God’s treasury, and clog our own hearts to the entrance of his blessing at the same time. I thank God that he has opened my eyes to see things as they are; but I don’t intend to take the expenses of my eye-opening operations out of my contributions to foreign missions. The new movement aims at a fivefold increase as

speedily as possible. Some will not do half that, I fear, so I mean to make mine tenfold as long as the Lord prospers me. It is all his anyway, and I am sure that he wants that much for his work."

CHAPTER VI

“**A**S long as we are on the subject of excuses, perhaps I might venture a word with regard to another sort,” came, in a strong, clear voice, from the rear of the church. A young man in the early twenties came briskly forward. He was a son of the church, a senior in the theological seminary. He was at home for a few days before his graduation. “I can never be sufficiently thankful that I was at home just at this time, for I feel that the experiences of these few days will make all the difference in my life between success and defeat. I had considered myself well intrenched against all arguments on the subject. We have had numerous missionaries and student volunteer secretaries at the seminary; and I have either managed to steer clear of them all, or, if cornered, have glibly poured out one reason after another why I should not go to the foreign field. When I came home the other day, there was nothing farther from my thoughts than going as a missionary, either foreign or home; but now I have no intention of staying in this country if God permits me to go. The explanation of this radical change is simply that every one of those ‘reasons’ for staying at home stood out clearly marked ‘excuse’ when I could see Christ sitting over against the treasury. Not one of them could be presented to him with

any hope of acceptance; and I had finally to throw them all overboard, and tell him that if he wants me I am ready to go.

"I had to go farther than that, however, for just there lay one of my most persistent excuses, the last to be got rid of—the excuse of the lack of a special call. In this, I am sorry to say, I had been strongly supported by one of our seminary professors, who felt very strongly on the subject of the special call to the ministry, and the special call to a particular portion of the field. Some of the students have urged him to define it, and his reply is, 'Being purely spiritual, it is very hard to define; but when it comes you will recognize it as being different from anything else.' Asked if it were an audible voice, he replied: 'No: it is not audible to the ear of the flesh, but to the ear of the soul. It is a conviction, not based upon reasoning, but directly from the Spirit, that you are to go to a certain work in a certain place.' This sort of indefiniteness just suited most of us, for, if we left our reason out of the account, we had very little difficulty in persuading ourselves that a definitely written, signed and labeled 'call' from an American church, at twelve hundred to three thousand dollars a year, was much more positive than an indefinite appeal from the Board of Foreign Missions to go somewhere in the foreign field at one thousand dollars per year; and the larger the church, the louder the call.

"Strange to say, we did not carry this latter

logic any farther, and compare the field of a million heathen with the home field of a thousand or two nominal Christians. Indeed, according to our professor, the question of relative need should hardly be considered, for the question of a call was one not for the judgment but for the emotions. And I was very certain that none of my feelings drew me to India or Africa.

"Ah, friends, the matter looks very different to me now, and especially since I came across a foreign mission parable in a paper to-day. It is not very long, and, with your permission, I will read it. It is entitled:

"AS IT WAS NOT IN THE DAYS OF JESUS CHRIST

"And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent; send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat. But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat? And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two

fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.'

"Now when the disciples had received the bread and the fishes, they first sat down upon the green grass and ate and were filled. While they were so doing, they began to say among themselves, 'If a man provide not first for his own, he is worse than a heathen and a publican. Wherefore, let us first look about for baskets, wherein we may store some of this food, lest, to-morrow and the day after, we and the Master may lack bread, and know not where to look for that which is needful to sustain and cheer us.' So all the disciples, save John, the brother of James, sought them out baskets, and filled twelve of them to overflowing with the bread and fishes which Jesus had broken, while John set off alone to give the hungry multitudes to eat.

"And it came to pass that when the eleven disciples had filled the baskets and set them aside, they said again one to another, 'It were great shame not to make use of this abundance, while it is in our hands, to provide still further against the future of our so uncertain lives. Yonder market has not yet closed for the day, and this food will bring good money on the market, which will serve for capital wherewith to carry on our work and provide for our families as well. He who liveth only in the present, and taketh no thought for the future, doeth foolishly. Let us put our Lord's pound into the hands of the banker, that in the future he may receive his own with usury.'

"It therefore seemed good unto them to separate seven of their number unto the work of carrying other baskets full of the bread and fishes (what a pity that it had been broken!) to the neighboring market town, where it found a ready sale, and the silver, the price thereof, gave forth a pleasant sound as it fell into the bag of Judas Iscariot (who also betrayed Him).

"Now after that the seven had departed, three of the other disciples joined themselves to John in carrying

the bread and fishes to the hungry multitudes. And it came to pass that, because the first five hundred of these people were near at hand, they gave first to them; and because they were old neighbors from among the fisher folk near Bethsaida of Galilee, they went back and forth, back and forth among them, to make sure that all were filled to the full, and that none failed to comprehend accurately the details of the chemical processes involved in the mastication and digestion of food. But when John saw how great was the multitude, and how few were the laborers, his heart, like the Master's, was moved with compassion toward them, and, when next he returned to the Master for a supply of the food, he said, 'Master, shall I not go to the multitudes beyond? Surely thou didst break the bread for them also! But what am I among so many? Canst not thou thrust forth more laborers into this work?' And the Master made answer, 'My disciple, thou hast judged rightly my purpose. I have sent you twelve unto the whole multitude; and thou alone hast comprehended my meaning. The others have, in whole or in part, failed to heed the thrusting which I have given them. Go, meet the greatest need, and thou shalt do well.'

"Now as John turned away to hasten with bread to the hungry, he findeth Peter standing there, his arms filled with bread and fishes, but looking uncertainly this way and that. And when he saw him he cried out, 'Simon, what aileth thee, the energetic and impetuous? Dost thou not see yonder multitude to whom no man is ministering? Bring thy load of food and come with me.' Simon Peter answered, saying, 'The Master hath not given me special instructions as to whither I should go; and I dare not leave these five hundred old neighbors without a special call.' Now Jesus overheard the words of the two disciples, and he turned him about and looked upon Peter with grief and indignation in his face and in his voice, as he said, 'O thou foolish disciple! Hath not thy Father in heaven given thee eyes to see, and ears to hear, a mind to

think and a heart to feel? Lift up thine eyes and look! Canst thou not see the thousands still hungry and unfed? Canst thou not see many of them wandering away, fainting and in despair, perhaps to fall by the wayside, while others are pulling and eating the grass about them in a vain attempt to satisfy their hunger? Open thine ears and listen! Canst thou not hear their despairing cry, "Come over and help us?" Exercise they mind! Canst thou not decide where the bread and the fishes in thy hand are the most keenly needed and will do the most good? Enlarge thy heart, that this need may appeal to thee as it appeals to thy Master; and ask me not for a special call. Have I not said unto you, "Give ye them to eat?" Trouble not thyself about the sufficiency of the supply for present or for future needs. Cannot he who has broken the bread unto you once, break it again if there be need?" And Simon Peter asked no longer for what had already been given him, the special call of a special need.

"Now it came to pass that night came on before the seven disciples could return from the market town, whither they had gone to sell the bread and the fishes. And there were those who had looked with covetous eyes upon the silver which they had received; and there followed them from the market ten men of the baser sort well armed with clubs, who fell upon them in the darkness, wounded them sore, and took from them not only what they had gained, but also the scanty hoard which Judas had aforetime carried in the bag.

"As the disciples crawled along the road to find the Master, they heard the moans of one and another of the five thousand who had been left unfed, and had wandered off into the night. Humiliated and sore, they rested on the mountain side that night, and awoke the next morning still weary and again hungry. Most eagerly did they uncover the twelve baskets of food so prudently reserved; but to their confusion and dismay the food had all bred worms and stank. 'Said I not unto you,' spake Jesus,

"Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you? Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want.""

When he had finished reading, the student continued: "It now seems to me as plain as day that the man who will not use the brains God has given him, and the word of God in the Scriptures, has no right whatever to expect that God will give him the special guidance of the Holy Spirit in the determination of practical questions of life work. While God certainly does help those who cannot help themselves, I am sure there is no promise that he will help those who will not help themselves; and I don't see any more reason why a young student of theology should wait for a mysterious supernatural voice to direct his choice of a field than to direct his choice of a seminary or a book or a typewriter. Let him exercise to the full the powers of judgment which God has given him, all the time asking God to direct, or, if need be, overrule, that judgment, and I believe he will know ten times more infallibly than by waiting for the mysterious voice. I still believe with all my heart in the 'still small voice,' but I don't believe it was ever intended to supplant sanctified common sense and judgment. The very man who insists

upon it with reference to the foreign call never thinks of waiting for it to decide between two home churches which have called him at the same time. He sits down and studies the two calls, considers the size and condition of the churches and the manses, the salaries, the length of vacations, and above all,—to put it charitably,—the size of the fields and their relative needs; and, with prayer for guidance, he lets his judgment decide.

“But I have talked long enough. The reason I feel so strongly is because I have just been through it all myself. And now, God willing, I am going as a foreign missionary, called by the greatest of all calls, the call of the greatest need to the man who is free to go anywhere, while many others are not.”

“Will you hear just one more student from the same school?” called another voice before the last speaker had even resumed his seat. “Even my classmate there did not know I was here, and I am the last member of the class from whom he would expect to hear the sort of testimony I am about to give. He knows what a hobby I have made of the study of comparative religions, and how strongly I have urged that the various ethnic religions are really only different forms of the worship of the one true God, with blemishes, it is true, but each one especially adapted to the genius of a particular people, the evolution of their need, and to them really the embodiment of the one eternal truth. I have maintained that the followers of each religion,

in all the various forms of their worship, were true seekers after God; and I have gone almost to the length of the self-styled 'New Theology' in persuading myself that even men's sins and vices are an endeavor to find God and fitly worship him. In these things I went far beyond any of our professors; partly, I now think, in my eager anxiety to quench the 'still small voice' that has for years been calling to me, 'Come over and help us! Come over and help us!'

"Coming to town to-day, and hearing some conversation about the events of the past few days in this church, I concluded to stay over and attend the meeting to-night. As I wanted to surprise my classmate, I did not go to his home, but stepped into the Y. M. C. A. rooms. Running my eye over the books in the library, I noticed 'Students and the Modern Missionary Crusade,' the report of the Nashville Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement. Such literature has not been very familiar to me in the past, but I took the volume aside and opened it at random. My eye fell upon an address entitled 'The Non-Christian Religions Inadequate to Meet the Needs of Men.' Could it be that I was wrong? The maker of that address was not given, I knew, to speaking rashly; in everything but the missionary question I had a great admiration for him. If he was right, then I was wrong.

"I started to read the address, and forgot everything else. Fair, absolutely fair, magnanimous

in concession of everything that could be conceded, yet he says:

"The modern, tolerant, easy-going attitude of some students of comparative religion is not the attitude of the Hebrew prophets, nor of the apostles of Jesus Christ. They never saw in the idolatry of man any upward moving of men's hearts toward a purer faith. They denounced that idolatry as puerile, as ignominious, as false, as sinful. * * * Of course there is good and truth in the non-Christian religions. It is that good and truth that is in them that has enabled them to survive, that gives them their great power; but there is no great truth in the non-Christian religions which is not found in a purer and richer form in the Christian religion. In Christianity each truth is balanced by its just corrective. Hindooism teaches that God is near, but forgets that he is holy; Mohammedanism teaches that God is great, but forgets that he is loving; Buddhism teaches that this earthly life is fleeting, but forgets that we must therefore work the works of God before the night comes; Confucianism teaches that we live in the midst of a great framework of human relationships, but forgets that in the midst of all these we have a living help and a personal fellowship with the eternal God, in whose lasting presence is our home. And the setting in which these truths are found in the non-Christian religions makes them often not a help but a positive hindrance to men. It is often harder to convince of error the man with the half truth than the man with nothing but demonstrable error."

And the speaker proceeded to illustrate the further fact that these non-Christian religions are seamed through and through with great and positive and hideous evils, imbedded in the religions and deriving their most terrible power from the

religious sanctions by which they are surrounded, by reference to the positive immorality of Hindooism, the sterility and unprogressiveness of Buddhism, stamping human nature as evil and all existence as evil, the puerility of the Shamanistic and fetichistic religions of Africa, Korea and China, the stagnation, impotence and moral inferiority of Moham-medanism. These cannot meet the intellectual needs of any race of men, nor their moral needs, because they present no perfect ideal, offer no living, transforming power, give no real conception of sin, nor of the value of truth, and have no adequate sanctions. Nor can they meet men's social needs in their debasement of women, their incapability of progress, their denial of the unity of mankind; nor men's spiritual needs; they are practically atheistic, do not teach the Fatherhood of God, speak no word of true hope, have no Calvary.

"When I read these last words of the address," the speaker went on, "I was brought to a decision:

"My fellow-students, as the owners and bearers of that name, how can we withhold from the hearts of men the sufficient message of their Father's life, their Father's love, made known alone in our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?

"It is all true, friends, and I felt that it was true all the time I was reading it; and I have failed to see it before because I had but a faint and feeble conception of what Jesus Christ has done for me. I have had no dream, no vision; but Jesus Christ

is tenfold more real to me now than he was three hours ago; and no longer by me shall the lamp of life be denied to souls who are indeed benighted in the darkness of sin and ignorance and superstition, for whom there is but one sufficient light, which, with the blessing of God, I will take to some of them while life is spared."

He had scarcely ceased speaking when a man of about sixty years of age, president of a large manufacturing concern, rose hurriedly to his feet and came to the front. He was a Christian man, but one whose voice had seldom been heard in the church. He spoke nervously, but with much feeling:

"Friends, I would much rather say nothing; but my life has been too long open to your view for me to honorably remain silent. You know how I have made what money I have—honestly, I believe in all sincerity, so far as the world's ideas of honesty go. I have never been a miser, nor closed my ears altogether to the cry of the poor, and I have contributed to public improvements and some public charities, and have helped to support the church. But I have come to the mournful conclusion, during these past few days, that all this time that I have maintained a reputation for honesty, I have been robbing God, and in so doing robbing my fellow-men.

"You all know what a pride I have taken in that new house of mine; how my wife and I spent weeks and months planning how we should tear

down the old house, good as it was, and build greater, though we had not a chick nor a child in the world. Every detail was studied out, and no expense was spared for architect, builder or materials. And when the house was done, we made journeys to New York and Boston, and up and down New England, to find things both new and antique to harmonize with the color scheme, and did not spare ourselves to make our home altogether the most attractive in Jaconssett. And you know how, when the house was done, and we had pronounced it good, and were ready to live in it and enjoy it, suddenly my wife was taken ill, the doctors could do nothing for her, and in the course of a few weeks she died, and my beautiful new house was left unto me desolate.

“I am a Christian; my wife was a Christian, I sincerely believe; but the life of both of us for many years past has been that of the man who pulled down his barns and built greater, and said to his soul, ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry’; and the Lord has said to us both,—to my wife in one way, to me in another,—‘Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; whose then shall those things be which thou hast provided?’ To do as I have done, it has been necessary to annually rob God of the percentage of my profits which should have steadily gone into his treasury in grateful acknowledgment of the prosperity which he has given me; and many are the

men who must have perished in ignorance and sin because I have robbed them of the chance which God had directed me to give them to hear the word of life.

“Friends, my grief at the loss of my companion a few weeks ago is made much heavier by the realization that these opportunities lost by my selfishness are gone, irretrievably gone. I cannot bring back to life one of those who have passed out into the dark through my neglect; but having sadly awakened to the realization that a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, I have no mind longer to play the fool, but will henceforth seek to be rich toward God.

“As proof of my sincerity in this resolution, I shall take advantage of the first opportunity to sell my new house, and devote the proceeds to the work of missions, at home and abroad. Meanwhile I shall be delighted to assume the support of either of these two young men who have just volunteered for foreign mission service. And I thank the Lord that he has opened my eyes to my own position, to which I was formerly as blind as the rich man of the parable. Pray for me, friends, that the hard chastening which has come to me may work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

CHAPTER VII

MR. STANTON was about to call for prayer, when a young business man arose, saying:

"I know it is growing late; but this is too important a time to adhere closely to regular hours, and I want to tell you some thoughts which have been burdening my mind this evening. I have been taking quite an interest in the men's movement, of which Brother Waterson was speaking. I have not had the means to take the tour around the world; but I have been at all the conventions of the movement. Those meetings have been mightily inspiring, I assure you. As one sat there he could feel his heart burn within him, and no sum seemed too great to raise for foreign missions, that the great Presbyterian Church might do its part by giving the light to its million people in the next twenty years. What were five hundred thousand dollars, or two million dollars, or six million dollars, to this great church? All it needed was information, education, interest, and the work would be done.

"But, friends, have you noticed one thing? The thought has been thrusting itself upon me—and most unwelcome it has been—that the men's boards and the women's boards and the young people's movements, and the brotherhoods and the sisterhoods, have been announcing annually that the

problem had been solved, that a campaign of education and information and inspiration had now been inaugurated which was going to bring men and women and money to the boards in such abundance that the world could be evangelized in this generation. And I have been told by a missionary friend that the board secretaries annually write to them saying something like this: 'We have just engaged such and such men to assist in the home department, or act as district secretaries; and they, in consultation with us, are adopting this and that and the other new scheme to secure a contribution from every member of the church and every child in the Sunday school. Keep up your courage: the sympathies of the church are with you; they are deeply interested in your work; and when the financial depression is past, and the presidential election is over, we shall see a better day. The General Assembly was enthusiastic over the foreign mission report and the speeches of the missionaries present, and we have great hopes for the future.' Shouldn't you think the missionaries would be made very happy by that sort of assurances? Alas, friends, that same missionary told me that that sort of letters has usually followed another sort, in which the mission was regretfully informed that, in spite of all the board could do, and in spite of all the new measures for interesting the church, the board had closed its year with a deficit of ninety thousand dollars, which, added to the last year's deficit of eighty

thousand dollars, made one hundred and seventy thousand dollars to burden the income of another year. And in view of these distressing financial facts, it was naturally impossible for the board to provide for the growing work any more than had been provided the year before; nothing could be granted for new property, and new missionaries could be sent only to fill vacancies. That is not one year's record, but, with variations, the record of many years. Yet our agencies and institutions to 'interest' the church have been multiplying tremendously the past few years.

"I tell you, friends, when I heard that, I could not help wondering whether what the church needed was 'interesting,' or such an overwhelming realization of the great facts of God and Satan and sin and salvation and heaven and hell, and Christ man's only Saviour, whether he be Jew or Gentile, Christian or heathen, as shall make us feel as Christ felt about the lost world. The 'interest' of mission study classes, and libraries and magazines and costly round-the-world tours and splendid, expensive conventions may be a large rate of interest on a very small capital. The question is not so much how much interest you and I get out of foreign missions as it is how much capital we put into them. How much stock do we take in them? I'll guarantee that there will be no lack of the best kind of interest in foreign missions when our capital is invested there. Just look at the interest of that big Presbyterian elder, who has invested some hundreds of

thousands, not of cold dollars, but of warm ones fresh from the heart, on his world tour! Where his treasure is, there his heart is; and I believe the other side is true also, that where the heart is, there the treasure is also pretty likely to be put.

"In a book I was reading the other day I came across a few sentences on this subject which are well worth repeating:

"The interest of the child is childlike; but the mere interest of the adult is childish. Let us have interest in the Sunday school, but let us have passion in the church. We must expect more from the church than an interest in that work of redemption, for which the Christ, whose followers we are, endured the agony of a Gethsemane and the heartbreak of a Calvary. The Master went to his death amidst apparent failure and defeat, content to foresee the result of that travail of his soul which should satisfy. Must it be said that his church can only carry on his work as she sees successes carefully tabulated into statistics, which will enable her to work out the ratio between souls saved and guineas subscribed? Can the work which was initiated by the passion of the Christ only be carried on as it appeals to the interest of the church?

"During the past three or four days our church here has shown a kind of interest far ahead of that which holds great conventions and promises millions,—next year,—and lets the board close its year one hundred and seventy thousand dollars in debt. We are now experiencing something of the passion, because we have seen the vision. The church as a whole lacks the vision which you and I have had; that is the trouble. Don't for a moment

think that I don't believe in these conventions and tours and promises; I believe in them most heartily, but they are not the whole thing, nor even a very large part of the whole; they are simply the prospectus. God forbid that the men's movement should prove to be all on paper or in the air. The missionaries and the home church are looking to it most hopefully, saying, 'Heretofore we have been playing; now we are going to have business principles applied, for the first time, on a large scale, to foreign missions.' God grant they may not be disappointed!

"Excuse me for talking so much about other people instead of myself; but really these remarks are of the nature of a confession, for they are only the development of these few days of a new view of Christ. And, for the first time, I have made my offering on the new basis."

Again the pastor was about to vary the meeting, but his people proved irrepressible. Several arose to their feet at once, among them a lady, to whom the men at once gave place. A well-to-do member of the church, decidedly a society woman, all were eager to hear what she had to say, especially when they saw the strange new look of mingled grief and resolution on her face.

"Friends, you will be surprised to hear from me, I know; but when I think of the number of missionaries and native preachers and teachers that I have eaten and drunk and worn in society life, and that I have seen my friends burn, my face feels

fairly scorching with shame. Mind you, I don't mean that I have come to believe that God does not mean us to have a good time. Jesus himself attended and blessed a wedding, and graced many a feast with his presence; but he never esteemed the social whirl an object in itself and for itself worthy of the devotion of his life and the neglect of other things—and I have. There are missionaries at my home now, laid up in jewel cases, and others in safety-deposit vaults at the bank. It is true that I have not gone so far in luxurious self-indulgence as the woman of whom I heard the other day, whose seaside house, occupied for six or eight weeks in the year, cost two million dollars, and who refused to let it for a season for two hundred thousand dollars; but the chief reason why I have not is, that I do not possess such sums of money. I never have thought of my time or my money or my voice or my house or myself as really belonging to God, to be used for him, though I doubtless have heard our pastor state the fact a great many times, and accepted it in a general way, which never made a whit of difference in my life.

“It was largely from the force of a habit established as a child (bless God for such habits, even if they are nothing more) that I attended service last Sunday morning. The vision of the Master began its work then; but it had a hard subject to work on, and even attendance at the evening service did not suffice to condemn and shame me to myself. I knew that things could not go on as

they had been going; but I rebelled against any change, and could see no prospect of happiness in this life except in the society life which has filled my heart until now. Monday did not bring peace; Tuesday did not bring peace; and only to-night have I found it, as I have been able to assent to the words that have been spoken here by one after another; and the real things of life have stood out before me in sharp contrast to the unreal and, after all, most unsatisfying—because incomplete and fleeting—pleasures which have been mine. If he will accept me, I mean to be henceforth one of the companions of the present Christ; and I shall make it my first business to-morrow to release some of my tied-up or locked-up missionaries and send them about the business which has so long been calling in vain for them.”

Several others were on their feet to speak at once; but the one who finally caught the ear of the house was a young man with a strong voice and an evidently decided intention to be heard.

“You haven’t heard a word from the doctors yet,” he said, “and there are a number of us here. Indeed, it’s a wonder what Jaconsett does with all her doctors. There are streets where you can count four or five in a row, and more on the next block. For a city with as good a health record as Jaconsett, I think we are pretty well supplied, and competition grows a bit keen at times, as I can testify since Dr. Jenkins moved in next door with an enviable Pittsburg reputation.

“Well now, really, when you come to think of it, doesn’t it seem a preposterous absurdity for the fine young men to be crowding into this profession and then hanging out their shingles in a fashionable street, right next door to three or four more, while there are great cities in the world which have never seen a doctor in the least worthy of the name, and where the people are born and grow up and are married and raise families, and suffer from all sorts of painful and loathsome diseases, with no one familiar with the simplest remedies to aid them, and plenty of people familiar with the most complex witches’ broths to pour down by the gallon, and most disgusting and torturing plasters and ointments to apply by the yard, and where thousands die who might have lived, and thousands live who would vastly better die? Does it strike you as exactly in accordance with the American sense of the eternal fitness of things for such a state of things to continue, especially when you add the farther fact that the vast majority of these poor aching, twitching, mortifying, dying creatures have no knowledge at all of another world of opportunity and blessing and fullness of life beyond this one?

“Now, I’m not going to urge the last men who have come into our community to give up the losing battle and go to China. It so happens, no one can tell why, that I have secured more than my share of paying practice in the competition. The rest of the doctors in Jaconsett may have it for the

winning, for I am going to China, and at my own charges."

"And I'll go with you"; "And I"; called out, in most undignified fashion, two of Dr. Corson's most intimate friends in the profession. Then one or two persons of little faith began to tremble lest an epidemic strike the city, and there be not enough doctors to go around!

It was a fitting conclusion, and time to stop. Mr. Stanton interposed by starting the long meter doxology, after which he said:

"Lord, thou hast searched us and known us. And, in the discovery of ourselves to ourselves, thou hast brought us blessing far beyond our most sanguine anticipations, for we have learned to know thee, the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent; and this is eternal life. Oh, give us that life yet more abundantly, until in very deed for us to live shall be Christ, and we shall have no will, nor desire to have, apart from the perfect, the beautiful will of God. Accept thou the living sacrifices which have been laid so willingly on thine altar; and accept thou in like manner those other sacrifices which represent the life of those who cannot in person heed thy great commission and go to the uttermost parts of the earth, those whose work lies here, but who are unwilling that the outreach of their hearts after thy lost ones shall be limited by any country or any race. Forgive all the past mistakes and failures that have been confessed, before thee, in public or

in the secret chamber; bless to the nations of the world what we are now doing and resolve to do; and make each one of us, and all who call themselves thy disciples, henceforth and forever, companions of the present Christ. In his ever blessed name, Amen."

The service closed; the congregation was dismissed; yet, in spite of the lateness of the hour the people seemed in no haste to disperse. Many who had given no public testimony were disposed to linger and talk with friends, or with their pastor, of their new relations with the Master and of the limitless outreach of the possibilities which had opened up for themselves and for the kingdom.

That was not the last meeting at which were heard echoes of Foreign Missionary Sunday in Jaconsett. Other churches were aroused, and the movement spread to other denominations and other cities until there was accomplished in actual fact, by the spirit-filled companions of the present Christ, that which so many "movements" had undertaken and only partially succeeded in accomplishing—the actual winning, for the work of taking Christ to the world, of both the hearts and the treasures of the church, which Christ so long ago redeemed to himself in his precious blood, and which he had then commissioned for this very purpose.

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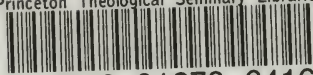
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